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## AN AMERICAN ENTREPRENEUR

### TERRY GROVE - DOWN-TOWN BOOSTER

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Written by June Grayson

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Photographs by Richard Grayson

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How do you revitalize Main Street, U.S.A.?

If you need a script, Terry Grove could write it. Grove

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is a St. Charles, Illinois, businessman and real estate developer

# ' '#' who has evolved his own promotional ideas even as he has bought  
#.#.###' #.and sold down-town properties. At first, these ideas might seem

!.'#'

ove#blown, even manic, but they work. Other communities already

find them worth copying.

.' ' It is no secret that the automobile and the shopping

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mall have changed the way Americans shop, perhaps forever. Some

business districts even die.

That did not happen in St. Charles.

"You have to provide new reasons for people to come into

'#..'

the down-town area,"according to Grove. "The residents do not

#"..' come because they are driving to the malls to shop. You have to

draw tourists. You do that by creating an image of the down-town

#'.#', district as a place to go to have fun."

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.. :;"" ,#

.(!:#.##:...

#..# . :!'

"" . . There are a lot of ways to have fun in down-town St.

"" . Charles. Some of those ways are the ideas of Terry Grove.

Board the bright-red, British, double-decker bus at any

.#'.# of the city motels to make the rounds of the sightseeing areas.

.Stop at "Century Corners" which anchors the east end of down-town

-#" " \_

#####. with it's turn-of-the-century restored shops and homes andaaPPenn-

sylvania Dutch restaurant. Hop on the bus again for the west end '#..

##### #of down-town Main Street to enjoy historic "Old St. Charles" -

##" " ..'

""..# #eight blocks of landmarks housing 35 craft and specialty stores

##." # #! and 100 antique dealers. Eat at the Old Church Inn built of stone

" ,

in 1851. Attend the seasonal festivities such as the Mid-America  
canoe race with over a thousand participants, a Scarecrow Contest

on the village square, and the Christmas Tree Decorating Contest

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in the exhibition hall.

in the exhibition hall.

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Grove did not plan to be an idea man for St. Charles but

always wanted to be a successful business man. "I started

in the exhibition hall.

at the St. Charles Country Club when I was 12 years old. I was too small to carry the golf bags so I had to use a cart.

You can imagine what I looked like then, since I am not very big

"now." Grove is 64 inches tall and weighs 135 pounds. "The successful people I met there became my role models and friends. I've been financially independent ever since."

He decided that the study of finance and law would provide

the best foundation for later business success. "I worked three jobs

to put myself through law school, When real estate boomed in

the real estate market, I did too."

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i.;#"

Grove bought his first local four-flat when he was 28,

his father had to co-sign the mortgage, and he and his new bride

moved into one of the flats, working at their full-time jobs during the day and restoring the other three flats on evenings and

weekends. "We bought two other apartment buildings to fix up,

selling them as soon as the capital gains period was up and always

making a profit."

Their first commercial property was a deserted and de-

teriorating little church and parsonage adjoining the business

district. "My wife, Laurie, is the creative one and she saw the

possibilities that no one else had seen."

The parsonage became

their first antique store and the church a magnificent restaurant

with real stained-glass windows, the original church pews for

seating, and a white-washed interior overflowing with lush hanging plants.

As more retail stores deserted downtown for outlying malls,

more buildings were for sale. Grove next. turned an empty automobile

showroom into "The Market" with 28 specialty shops under

one roof. He instituted the concept of shared clerking with one

central cashier so that no shop owner has to work more than two

days a week even though the stores are open all seven days.

He has since converted three other stores into "Antique I, II,

and III", using the same concept of shared clerking and making St.

Charles the antique capital of the midwest United

.... States.

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His latest acquisition, a huge building adjoining the

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Fox River, serves as a meeting and convention ha!! . Grove expects /###

the first annua! Christmas Tree Decorating Contest and Display to ##### be held

during the coming holiday season will bring thousands of

"##.. .

#...#####new visitors to St. Charles shops and restaurants.

Grove doesn't claim his ideas are original.

"Why not

.#####copy something that is already successful?

My forte is to take an

#####.# # idea and run with it."

Grove shares his script for down-town renewal as follows:

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1) create a new identity for the area, something that is fun and

.### attracts outsiders, 2) choose a catchy name and form an organization

#####. # to#promote it, 3) give a press dinner and send out press releases introduce it, 4) start -| .

Bureau that can qualify for

#!local support and government grants and arrange publicity, programs, ###.##.#and

tours, 5) plan recurring seasonal festivals, 6) have a year

##."##. around meeting and convention hall, and 7) introduce something new "" ##  
and.co!orful periodica!ly, i.e. - the Red Bus.

" ". "

Grove operates on the "win-win" principle.

"The pie

does not have to stay the same size, so that if my piece gets big"  
ger yours gets smaller. We can make a bigger pie so that we all

get a bigger piece."

Grove has done more than secure his family's financial # future.

"I've had fun all the way."

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